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LETTER DATED 15 JUNE 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you a statement of Eritrea's acceptance of the agreement for a total ban of air strikes by Eritrea and Ethiopia issued on 15 June 1998 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea.

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Haile MENKERIOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

98-16824 (E) 150698

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Annex

Statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea on 15 June 1998

STATEMENT ON THE AGREEMENT FOR A TOTAL BAN ON AIR STRIKES

The Government of Eritrea has accepted the proposal put forward by the Government of the United States of America yesterday, 14 June 1998, on a total ban of air strikes by both sides. The agreement provides for Eritrea and Ethiopia to "halt immediately the further use of air strikes and the threat of air strikes in their present conflict". The moratorium "will continue indefinitely or until such time as either party concludes that any prospect for a peace process has come to an end and provides a formal, advance notice to the United States Government that it will no longer respect this moratorium".

The Government of Eritrea has consistently been calling for the cessation of hostilities and the demilitarization of the entire boundary to allow for a peaceful resolution of the dispute with Ethiopia. The border conflict was exacerbated by Addis Ababa's recourse to air raids when the Ethiopian air force launched the first air strike against Asmara on 5 June 1998. Eritrea's subsequent deterrent actions against military targets were simply in retaliation and legitimate self-defence. As the Government of Eritrea does not see any sense in the ongoing confrontation in general and the air war in particular, it welcomes this agreement with Ethiopia on a partial cessation of hostilities as a positive and first step towards ending the war and resolving the conflict through peace and legality.

The Government of Eritrea wishes to avail of this occasion to express its gratitude to the Governments of the United States and Italy for their endeavours in this regard.